

## Find Out More About Tree Care

Additional information about how to properly plant and care for trees is available from your local Oregon State University Extension office, from professional arborists, and on the Internet.

The website for the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), at [www.isa-arbor.com](http://www.isa-arbor.com) contains consumer information brochures on topics including the *Benefits of Trees*, *Mature Tree Care*, *How to Recognize Tree Hazards*, and others.

ISA's Pacific Northwest Chapter website at [www.pnwisa.org](http://www.pnwisa.org) contains a wealth of tree care information including lists of certified arborists who work for commercial tree care companies and as consulting arborists.

The National Arbor Day Foundation website at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) also contains tree planting and tree care information for homeowners.

Learn more about community forestry by visiting the Oregon Community Trees webpage at [www.oregoncommunitytrees.org](http://www.oregoncommunitytrees.org).

## Oregon Department of Forestry



This brochure was produced by the Oregon Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry Assist. Program. Visit our website at [www.odf.state.or.us/forestlandowners](http://www.odf.state.or.us/forestlandowners) for more information about trees. You can email the urban forestry staff at [urbanforestry@odf.state.or.us](mailto:urbanforestry@odf.state.or.us) or call us at (503) 945-7391.



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# An Oregon Homeowner's Guide to Tree Care



## Oregon Department of Forestry Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program



## PROPER TREE CARE

Proper tree care is a mystery to some. Plant a tree and nature will take care of the rest, right? Not necessarily. The trees in our yards, neighborhoods, and cities are a valuable asset, and they require our help to keep them healthy.

Proper tree care is important because trees are an investment in the value of your home and the livability of your neighborhood. Trees in our cities contribute to the quality of our lives by cleaning our air, cooling and shading our homes, and increasing property values and the attractiveness of a community. Sounds like trees work pretty hard, doesn't it?

There is a "right way" and a "wrong way" to care for trees. If your trees had the opportunity, would they move to your neighbor's yard? If so, here are some tips you need to know about how to keep your trees healthy and working for you.

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Research has dispelled some long-held tree care myths. Here are some facts you may not know:*



**FACT:** Once mature, most trees do not have a taproot. They have anchor and feeder roots that are mostly in the top three feet of soil and often extend beyond the canopy width of the tree.

**FACT:** Painting wound dressing on pruning cuts is unnecessary and can actually hurt the tree by causing the pruning cut to seal slower.

**FACT:** Cutting branches flush with the trunk will rob the tree of natural chemicals used to close the wound. This will lead to decay in the tree.

## WHY TOPPING HURTS TREES

Topping is the senseless practice of indiscriminately removing a majority of a tree's branches. Topping violates most commonly accepted methods of proper pruning. Many people think that topping will help their trees, but in reality it is one of the worst things you can do to your tree!

Topping does not make your tree safe. Topping actually creates a more dangerous tree because the branches that "sprout" after topping are weakly attached and as a result they are more likely to break in a snow, ice, or windstorm. Topping also makes your tree prone to insect and disease damage because improper cuts invites decay. Topping actually starves your tree by removing leaves that help the tree grow. Topping is also expensive because it will not keep your tree small unless repeated every year, and because it will shorten the life span of your tree. By contrast, the positive effects of proper pruning will make your tree healthier and extend its life. Clearly, topping is not in YOUR or YOUR TREE'S best interest!

### DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOUR TREES!

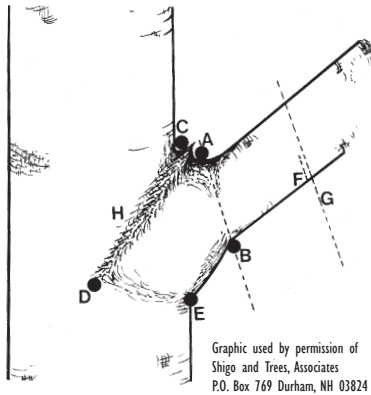


## NATURAL TARGET PRUNING

Making careful and correct pruning cuts is one of the best things you can do for your trees. These guidelines and the accompanying graphic will help you make the right cuts:

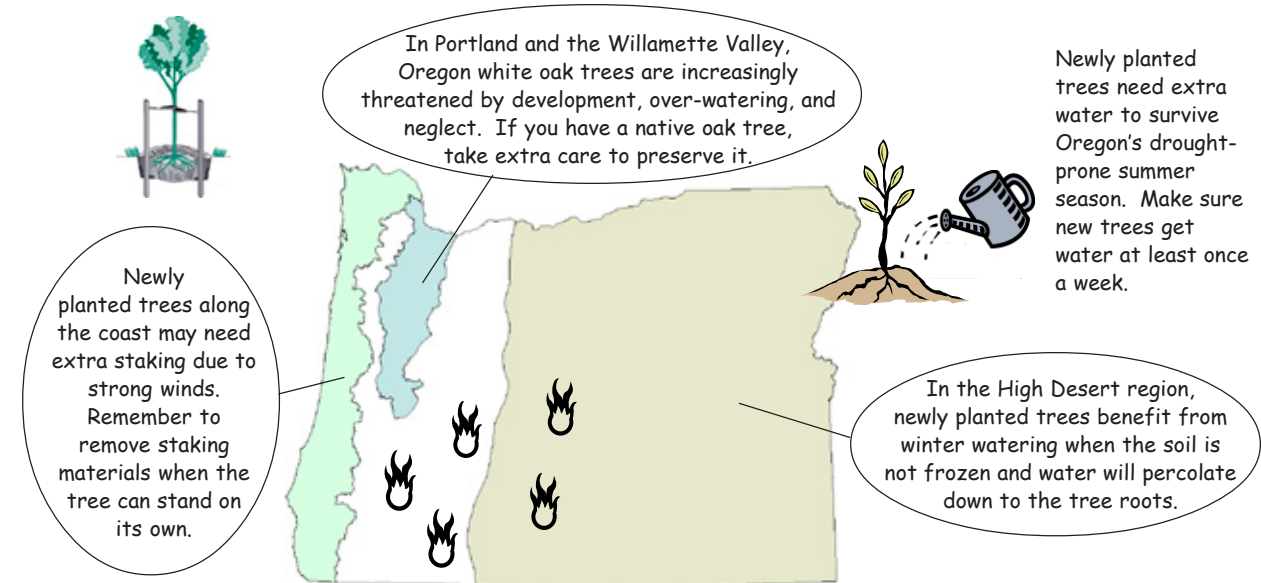
### Natural Target Pruning


- Locate the branch bark ridge (H) and the branch collar (E to B).
- Stub cut the branch (up F, down G).
- Locate points A and B where the branch meets the branch collar.
- Cut from A to B, or from B to A with care.
- If position of B is uncertain, draw a line in your mind from A to E.
- Angle EAD is approximately the same as angle EAB.
- Point D is the beginning of the branch bark ridge (H).
- Do not leave stubs.
- Do not paint the wounds.







Never “flush cut” a tree by removing the branch collar. For hardwood trees the best time to prune living branches is late in the winter before the leaves form in the spring. Conifers can generally be pruned anytime, using caution during their flush of growth in early summer. Dead and dying branches can be pruned anytime. Always use sharp tools and make clean cuts. Use caution with sharp tools and power saws. Remember, safety first.

## TREE CARE AROUND OREGON










 In Oregon's wildfire-prone areas, homeowners need to take steps to minimize the fire hazard around their homes. Fire-resistant plants, carefully placed and maintained, can help protect your home and property.

## A Few Questions to Ask Yourself BEFORE You Plant A New Tree







-  Does the site provide enough room for the tree's crown and roots to grow?
-  Are there utility wires or other obstructions underground or overhead?
-  What is the soil like? Sandy or clay? Poorly drained or well drained? Is there an adequate water source?
-  What functions will the tree serve? Do you want shade, a windbreak or screen, or fall color? The answers to these questions will determine your species choice.

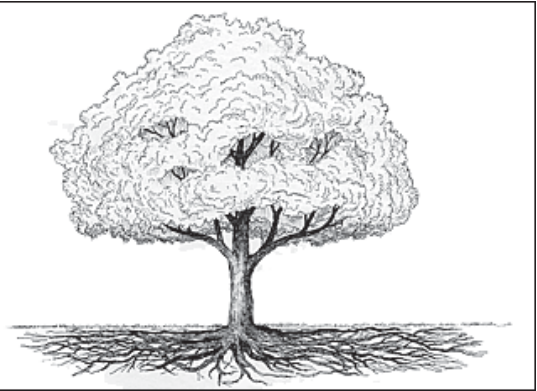
## How to Have the Best Looking Trees in Your Neighborhood

-  Plant the right tree in the right place. Choose the site and find a tree with characteristics for that site. For example, a Douglas-fir tree should not be planted under powerlines due to it's height.
-  Mulch around the tree to avoid soil compaction and root suffocation. Use a ring of wood chips 2-4 inches deep extending 2 feet out from the base of the tree, keeping the mulch slightly away from the tree trunk.
-  Give your trees a drink! Newly planted trees need water regularly each week during the dry season.
-  Protect young trees from mowers, weed-eaters, and other equipment.
-  Leave roots alone. Damage to tree roots is a common cause of tree death in home landscapes.
-  Prune according to accepted methods. Hire an arborist when the job is too big.
-  If you think your tree is too large, don't top it! You might be better off cutting the tree down and planting a smaller variety.

## Tips on How To Select An Arborist To Care for Your Trees

When the job is too big for you to handle safely, it is time to call in a professional. Here are some tips for selecting an arborist to care for your trees:

-  Hire someone who is bonded, licensed and insured. In Oregon, tree service companies must register with the state, but that is no guarantee of quality.
-  Ask for references and get more than one bid. Take your time and select a company you know is reputable.
-  Look for a Certified Arborist, someone who has passed the International Society of Arboriculture Certification Exam.
-  Beware of “doorknockers.” Most companies have business cards, uniforms, truck signs, etc.
-  A good arborist rarely recommends topping, and should try to talk you out of it if you ask to have it done. Avoid tree topping at all costs.
-  When pruning trees, climbers should not use spurs in order to prevent damage to the bark.



With proper care, your trees will remain an asset to your property for years to come. Now that you know how to care for your trees properly, pass this brochure on to a friend or neighbor!